The Mystery of the Summer House

CHAPTER VIII. (Cont'd) What the Butler and the House-

maid Had to Say. NE among the many mysteries of that dreadful night was the way by which my Aunt Enid had gone from the house to meet her death. I think I have said that there was a track leading out of the main footpath through the shrubbery to the door of the conservatory which adjoined my aunt's boudoir.

She kept the key of the conservatory door, the gardener coming to her for it when there was any work for him in the small conservatory. and returning it to her again. It was by this door that she usually went out into the garden or grounds, and this seemed the nataral way for her to go if the moonlight and the beauty of the night had attracted her out for a stroll.

But the difficulty in accepting that otherwise most natural and simple explanation was that the door was found locked and no key in it. If she had gone out through it and locked it behind her it was reasonable to think that the key would be found attached to her, in her dress or by her body. But it was nowhere to be seen.

How then did she make her exit? That was one among the many problems-a minor one, perhapswhich called for solution. There was no other obvious way out except through the front door, which she certainly had not used, or through the library. And if she had gone through the library Uncle Raiph Dust have seen her. He appeared to have been in that room practically all the evening, and it was a room which my aunt hardly ever went into. All the downstairs windows were closed and bolted. It was very strange.

It never was necessary for my uncle, if he wished to go out at any me after the front door was ed, to unbolt and unchain and that principal portal of the His library had large winpening right down to the and all that he had to do

mich an the lower half of less and, stooping a very ster out through it. That him on to the gravel sweep st opposite the point at he gravelled footpath went m it and led away to the

1 into my aunt's boudoir er found an occasion for folthe detective. He came to an mince that Larncombe was below and would be g'ad to know whether Sergeant Crisp had any orders for him. The detective hesitated a moment and then said, "I will come and speak to him."

He then thanked Susan for the attention with which she had heard and answered his questions, expressed a hope to Celeste that he might have the pleasure of a talk with her a little later, and went down with the butler to where Larncombe was awaiting him at the back door.

"Well," he said to the constable as soon as he had led him out of earshot of the attentive Grainger, "have you made any discoveries? Larncombe shook his head. "Nothing fresh," he said "May I be allowed to ask whether you

have, sir?" "So many," Crisp replied, "that I cannot see clearly where they are leading. Now, tell me, where is the nearest magistrate or justiceexcepting, I mean, Sir Ralph."

Larncombe mentioned a neighbor living about a mile and a half away; but he could not say whether he was at home at the moment. "Then please go over at once and

ascertain. It will be convenient to know in case we make an arrest." "In case we arrest Jim Heasden?" Larricombe exclaimed, all aglow with excitement. "Why, I knowed all along as it was him."

"Then you've known all along a great deal more than I kno v even now." said the sergeant. "But go along and find that out for me. That's what I want you to do."

The constable might have been less pleased had he also known that one main purpose of his errand, unavowed to him by Sergeant Crisp, was to get him out of the way so that the sergeant might be quit of him and be free to conduct his inquiries in his own way for an hour or two at least of the after-

CHAPTER IX.

What the French Maid Had to Tell. T THINK that a detective's life must be in some ways a very dreadful one. Of course it has its interests in the problems which these unravellers of mysteries are constantly called upon to solve, but in going about, trying to solve them, they have to be perpetually playing a part; they can never be themselves.

I know, from what Sergeant Crisp told me afterward, that already and from the first moment that he had seen that imprint of an evening shoe on the soft soil beneath the window of the Summer-house, he had begun to have a very terrible suspicion or doubt or inkling of a possibility in his mind; and it was a suspicion strongly confirmed by that identity of out-



the paper pattern of the footprints "pump" in my uncle's And yet with this dreadful pos

line which he had traced between

sibility growing up in him he had come to my uncle, as he did that afternoon, when they had a talk together in the library, as if he were approaching him in the most candid and open manner, in perfect confidence, and as if they were as a matter of absolute course working hand in glove together to one end in common-the discovery and the conviction of the criminal who had stabbed my poor young aunt to death.

To be exact, the sergeant's suspicions at the commencement of this interview ranged over several persons, and among those of whom he had his shrewd doubts was that enigmatical Grainger with his Sphinx-like reticence. There must surely be something hidden behind an attitude of such impenetrable reserve as that.

Uncle gave him his opportunity for commenting on it almost at the outset of their talk by saying that he hoped Sergeant Crisp was receiving all the assistance he required in his investigations: The detective replied to that that every one had seemed very ready to help him so far with the single exception of the butler.

"Ah," said my uncle, "he's a dour eilent Scot."

"Yes." Crisp persisted, "but he's more than that. He's more than negative. I can swear he's post tively opposed to my investigating. He followed me as I went about the house this morning like a cat watching a mouse. A more impressionable man than myself might quite reasonably have been frightened-afraid that he might do me a bodily injury."

summer-house itself, seeing my aunt go in and assaulting her for the sake of her jewelry" "Oh," said uncle, "I really think that must be a little imagination

tramps, perhaps sleeping for the night in the bushes or in the

on your part. Grainger is constitutionally and even naturally silent and reserved, but he could not want to obstruct your inquirythat is, always supposing that you do not suspect him of having had a hand in the crime.

"It is a rule in our profession," the detective said, "to suspect everyone. Can you suppose that he could have had any possible grudge which he could wish to pay off on her ladyship?"

"Impossible," said Uncle Ralph. "The idea is quite out of the question. No, no grudge at all." "And was there anyone—had her

ladyship an enemy?" "Not that I am at all aware ofand I think I should have known if she had."

"Not this man Heasden, for instance?" the sergeant asked. "Did not her ladyship catch him poaching or trespassing or the like?"

Why, yes, and I have no doubt she may have spoken sharply to him. But you are not going to find a motive for murder in that?" "I suppose not, I suppose not,"

the detective repeated thought-"You think that was the only time she spoke to him?" "I never heard of any other."

Uncle Ralph said, much astonished. "Quite so, Sir Ralph, quite so," id Crisp. "Now, I do not wish said Crisp. to worry you with questions. Will you let me say how deeply I have felt for you? The circumstances have been most terribly painful.

Your last night's watch must have

"Of course

there was

always the

possibility

of some

been a cruel trial." "Naturally it was very painful," said my uncle, in a tone which he presumed would check the man's unsolicited expressions of sympathy; but he pursued, neverthe-

"I always find, myself, in a long period of waiting in trying circumstances a wonderful relief and comfort in tobacco. Nicotine is a blessed comforter. I daresay you were able to find much relief from its help during your vigil."

"Certainly I did not," replied Uncle Ralph, beginning to feel more than a little outraged by the sergeant's tactless persistence. could not have smoked then-there -over her body."

The sergeant was all penitence in a moment.. "Forgive me," he said. "I ought to have known better than make the suggestion. Of course, at such a moment, you could not. I ought to have under-

stood. He passed quickly on to other questions. Had Sir Ralph any idea of any errand on which Lady Carlton might have been going when she went out thus at dead of night? Sir Ralph could not help him with

any suggestion of a motive. "It might have been that her ladyship was troubled and could not sleep and that the beauty of the night tempted her."

"Oh, yes," uncle agreed, "it might conceivably have been that." "And would this have been at all a usual thing-for her ladyship to

Certainly not usual at all, but

her ladyship had done such a thing before to Sir Ralph's knowledge. "I suppose the Summer-house was a place you often went to?" Sergeant Crisp asked then.

"Oh, in the daytime, yes.- Not at night, though. "You were there yourself, I daresay, in the course of yesterday?" "No," Uncle Ralph said. "No. As

it happens, I had not been in it for several days-until last night." "And you went, then, straight to the Summer-house with Livesay?" "Straight to the Summer-house yes-naturally," said Uncle Ralph,

not quite understanding the ques-"And the door was shut-yes?"

Uncle Ralph nodded. "And you went down, I suppose. and opened it-did you open it or Livesay?'

"I-I was in front of him." "And there you saw—it must have been a terrible shock to you.' "Naturally, it was," Uncle Ralph replied, "but I was .prepared, of course. Livesay had virtually told

I suppose that the detective's professional acuteness was shown just as much in the questions

And, of course, we knew that the future held in store a further very painful trial—the coroner's inquest. This was to be held on the Monday -the day of which I am now writ-

his arrest. But at the same time

he did not deem it to suffice for

the immediate serving of the war-

rant. He proposed to keep it ready

for use in case of need.

which he left unasked as in those

ing being Saturday-at the White Hart, in the willage. But it would be necessary, we were told, for the corpse to be seen, as a matter of legal form, by the coroner and his jury, and for this purpose they would come to the house and to my Aunt Enid's room, where her poor little body was now laid out decently on the bed.

What I resented a great deal more than this visit of inspection, though in itself it seemed rather an outrage on the peace of death was that the tragedy and many family affairs that I would far rather had been kept secret, would be given up to the curious gossip of the public and would become the common talk of the village. To be sure, this was a trivial thing in comparison with the actual tragedy itself, but still it all helped to add a sordidness which increased the

Of course Crisp, in these interrogations through which he put us, had none of the authority of a coroner or of a judge. We were not under oath in our examination. He had no power to compel us to answer if we did not wish or to check any flood of talk under which truth might hide itself away as behind a smoke cloud. He could not punish us for contempt of court. The power to extract answers

from the unwilling is one which, I

know, he much wished that he had

when he was putting his questions to the reluctant Grainger—there was one question in particular which he longed to ask him but thought that he would get answer, so refrained-but came to the interrogation next witness. Celeste, I a sure that what he most e would have desired was the power to check an excess of falk. Celeste's tongue normally required only very slight encouragement to start it running to incalculable lengths, and she now appeared to be so excited over this terrible thing which had happened to her mistress that she was even more

I had never been able to make out whether Celeste was fond of my aunt. As a rule the servants did not love Aunt Enid. They did her bidding, because she spoke to them sharply and had no considerations for their feelings, treating them, in fact, as I have observed that people who have lived some time in India and have been used to ordering their Hindu servants about do deal with English servants when they come home; and. in consequence, have much difficulty in keeping them. But our servants stayed, partly because Aunt Enid did not really take the wife's usual share in ordering her household, but largely also because of the affection they one and all felt for Uncle Ralph.

If Aunt Enid was a little too severe and sharp, he certainly was far too spoiling and kind. He hated to have to say a word in rebuke to any of them, and as a matter of fact generally passed on to me the task of saying it. Not a very pleasant task, but I felt that I had to take my world, and especially my Uncle Ralph, as I found them, and on no account would I have made any change in the latter, even if I could.

all of them. And then he asked

whether uncle had formed any idea,

possibility of some tramp, hidden,

perhaps sleeping for the night in

the bushes or in the Summer-house

itself, seeing my aunt go in and

assaulting her for the sake of her

jewelry or anything she had about

her. That supposition was in part

contradicted by the fact that noth-

ing, so far as we knew, had been

taken from my aunt. Her rings

and jewelry were there on the

body-really adding to the dread-

fulness of its appearance, as I

thought. But, of course, it was al-

ways conceivable that the tramp,

or whoever it was, might have

been scared, as soon as he had

done the deed, by his own act, or

might have heard footsteps-per-

haps Livesay's own-and may have

fled before reaping the fruits of his

I understand that they talked

over the thing in all its aspects.

but could find no satisfactory solu-

point the detective lamented that

he had left his cigarette case be-

hind and asked uncle if he could

give him a cigarette, as tobacco al-

ways stimulated his mental activ-

ity. Uncle, I think, considered the

request rather a cool one from a

man in the sergeant's position, but

he gave him the cigarette he had

asked for readily enough and the

Possible solutions of the mystery

were not wanting, but proof was

lacking. The only person, as they

agreed, against whom there was

any evidence was the semi-gypsy,

the Adonis and bad boy of the vil

lage, Jim Heasden, but even against

him the evidence that he had actu-

ally been in the Summer-house it

self was not quite clear, though

apparently Crisp thought it suffi

cient for getting out a warrant for

and the state of t

debate proceeded.

At one particularly knotty

crime.

Of course, there was always the

any theory of the murder.

Possibly there were times when might wish him a stronger character, more determined and assertive, and especially I might feel this now and then in regard to his relations with Aunt Enid, but on the whole any change of the kind would have made him different from the Uncle Ralph whom knew and loved; and assuredly did not want him different.

But I was never quite sure to what extent Celeste shared in the feelings of the other servan's toward their master and mistre he first place she was el her mistress's servant. next to nothing to do wit ter. Uncle Ralph, I this little afraid of her. Any a voluble tongue and a ing manner always madrather shy. As he said h did not like women who ways bowling half-volleys at you.

Just what kind of ball it was with which Aunt Enid had taken his wicket I never could quite make out, for I should much have suspected her of being an irrepressible half-volley bowler, in Uncle Raiph's sense. Perhaps his eye was a little dazzled at the moment with the Indian sunlight.

Celeste I always regarded as being in some ways rather like my Aunt Enid-akin in nature, I mean. More unlike in face two women, both tolerably young and rather pretty, hardly could be, for Aunt

(Continued on Nest Page

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